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SENSITIVE

STATE PASS TO EPA (RACHEL SCHMELTZ AND ANDREW FANARA)  
DEPT OF ENERGY FOR RICHARD KARNEY

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [TRGY](#) [TSPL](#) [XG](#) [FI](#)

SUBJECT: Finland Prepares for EU Presidency and CSD 14 -  
Spotlight on Energy

11. (SBU) Summary: In preparation for Finland's upcoming presidency of the EU, OES representatives Jonathan Margolis and Griffin Thompson visited Finland to discuss areas of cooperation and to share views on the current cycle of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Margolis and Thompson encouraged bringing education and innovation to the forefront of Finland's EU agenda. They urged their counterparts to take a practical and pragmatic approach to CSD. Margolis and Thompson discovered areas of possible cooperation on international energy development projects, perhaps through the Global Village Energy Partnership. Generally, the Finns responded well to these suggestions, though they thought that policy (in addition to implementation) should be a desired outcome of CSD 14. End summary.

12. (U) On October 14-18, Special Representative for Sustainable Development and OES/PCI Office Director Jonathan Margolis and Senior Energy Advisor Griffin Thompson visited Finland. They met with Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Markus Lyra as well as with officials from the Ministries of Environment, Foreign Affairs and Trade and Industry. Margolis and Thompson shared their views on US environmental policy with Finnish journalists. They also visited central Finland, where they learned more about Finnish innovation and technology and visited a farm operated entirely on bio-gas. This visit highlighted the Finnish domestic strengths of education and innovation and framed the discussions with the GOF on how these strengths can guide future international discussions on energy and development, with specific focus on the CSD energy cycle.

13. (SBU) In their meeting with U/S Lyra, Margolis and Thompson encouraged bringing education and innovation to the forefront of Finland's EU agenda--not only through CSD but through other channels as well, including UNEP, World Bank, UNDP, bilateral discussions and regional development banks. Lyra responded favorably, adding that this could also be an item on the Transatlantic agenda. Nonetheless, while good humouredly recognizing the EU's over-reliance on directives, he expressed hope that the US would be "open to discussing regulations" as well.

14. (SBU) On CSD, Margolis and Thompson urged their MFA and MOEN colleagues to see CSD 14/15 as an opportunity to implement existing policy, rather than create additional guidelines, procedures and documents. In the spirit of UN reform, the focus should be on actual projects that improve people's lives. Margolis discussed the US position on the need to utilize all energy sources including nuclear, coal, oil, gas and renewable energy. Furthermore he pointed out how all energy sources are used for specific development ends ranging from health to education to economic growth and environmental stewardship. He defined his views on the role of CSD: raising the profile of issues and bringing together actors to provide a set of solutions to developing countries.

15. (SBU) The Finns countered with their view that CSD plays an important role in creating policy and that the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation required some updating. Nevertheless, they expressed willingness to work with the US in aggressively pushing forward energy issues in the current CSD cycle. They shared information on Finnish energy efficiency projects in Kenya and Central America, and mentioned that they would be hosting an international energy audit conference in September 2006. Margolis encouraged the GOF to play an active role in EU-JUSCANZ consultations on CSD issues during their EU presidency, perhaps by hosting a meeting of respective parties in preparation of CSD-15.

16. (U) The sincerity of Finland's commitment to energy issues was made clear in a subsequent meeting, when Ministry of Trade and Industry officials shared details on their national action plan to promote energy efficiency. The plan, which is now in its fourteenth year, boasts a (voluntary) industry participation rate of 85%, and has resulted in modest yet recognizable (2%) annual energy savings.

17. (SBU) Thompson suggested that Finland's energy projects in Central America and Kenya may complement the activities of the Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP) and recommended examining if/how these programs could be integrated. Thompson expressed support for the international audit conference and said that the US would be willing to help Finland identify key participants, particularly promising developing countries with the greatest potential to benefit from the program. Thompson agreed to discuss this further with the Finnish delegation at the Beijing International Renewable Energy Conference on November 7th.

18. (U) Margolis and Thompson met with local representatives from the press. During the discussion, Margolis articulated the US energy policy on technology and fuel source diversity, underscoring the range of successes the US has demonstrated on energy efficiency programs and lowering greenhouse gas intensity through smarter technology choices. At the meeting, and in subsequent discussions, the press tried to make the linkage between Hurricane Katrina and climate change. Margolis pointed out, with post's support, that no climate change expert has made such a connection and that the USG focus was and has been on humanitarian response.

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COMMENT  
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19. (SBU) U/S Lyra noted that FM Tuomioja would raise environmental issues during his meeting with Secretary Rice on November 1st. Given this emphasis on the importance of environmental issues in the US-Finnish and perhaps broader US-Nordic relationship, it seems likely that the issue will be on the US-EU and the G-8 agendas for some time to come, and will place high on the agenda of the Finnish EU presidency.

110. (SBU) The OES visit was well-timed (as Finland begins mapping out its presidency agenda) and well-received. Post believes (as does host government) that additional visits in the period ahead could be invaluable in furthering mutual understanding and ensuring a highly-productive and mutually beneficial presidency term. Finland's commitment to innovation and its vested interest in efficient and clean energy technology makes it an ideal potential partner during the 2006-7 cycle of CSD. In this regard, the timing of its EU presidency next autumn could not be more fortuitous.

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